GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:523
ANSWERED ON:02.05.2002
EXAMINATION OF DEFENCE FILES
SUNIL KHAN

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that files and documents related to defence deals were examined by an outsider Shri R.V. Pandit;

(b) if so, how Shri Pandit got access to those files which have not been placed in Parliament;

(c) whether anyone can examine defence files without proper authority; and

(d) the person who authorised Shri Pandit to enter into Ministry of Defence and examine defence deals files?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 523 FOR 2.5.2002

Shri R.V. Pandit did not examine any file and documents related to defence deals in the Ministry of Defence.

Shri R.V. Pandit, a prominent journalist, had requested information and supporting documents related to the procurement of Aluminium Caskets from the Ministry of Defence (MOD).In the light of the Question answered by MOD on the procurement of Aluminium Caskets in the Lok Sabha, Statement of Facts already sent to Parliament, the Press Conference given by the Raksha Mantri on this issue on 11.12.2001, a Press Note issued on 11.12.2001, which had all relied on these very documents. In addition, the MOD had also sent a background note to senior journalists on procurement of Aluminium Caskets alongwith copies of related documents. These documents were already in the public realm and were also sent to Shri R.V. Pandit, who has relied on them, in his book.

No files of the MOD can be examined by any person not working in MOD. However, non classified documents can be given with the approval of the Competent Authority in the public interest to a person not working in the Ministry.